

Why you  
should be  
excited  
about

# ROGUE ONE:

## A STAR WARS STORY

Words Scott Hocking

**I**t's Star Wars, that's the obvious reason. It's also the very first in a series of spin-off movies set in the universe George Lucas created back in 1977, which makes it uncharted territory of sorts.

This is the first Star Wars movie that won't feature an episode number on the opening title crawl (if indeed it will have an opening crawl – it would be wrong not to), as it's part of a collective of 'Star Wars stories'.

It's also the first Star Wars film without a score by the legendary John Williams, which sounds like heresy, but you can almost count on his signature theme – or a variation thereof – being heard at some point. Michael Giacchino, Pixar's regular composer (who also scored the three new Star Trek films) has an impossible act to follow.

The beloved characters we associate with the saga are also absent, with the exception of Darth Vader, voiced once again by the great James Earl Jones. How prominently he will figure in the film remains to be seen, but it's likely to be just a cameo appearance. Also returning is rebellion leader Mon Mothma, (Genevieve O'Reilly), who we saw in *Return of the Jedi* and *Revenge of the Sith*.

Although a standalone adventure, *Rogue One* is an important part of the Star Wars canon, perhaps even more so than *The Force Awakens*. This is a story we kind of know already but have never seen: the theft of the Death Star plans by the Rebels. A mere snippet from *A New Hope*'s credit crawl has been expanded as a feature!

During the battle, rebel spies managed to steal secret plans to the Empire's ultimate weapon, the **DEATH STAR**, an armored

Heroine Jyn Erso (Felicity Jones) may well be the 'Original Hope'. Her rap sheet includes the forging of Imperial documents, aggravated assault and resisting arrest – the ideal leader of a potential suicide squad sent deep into enemy territory. Indeed, there's already a Dirty Dozen vibe to this Star Wars Story, with Jyn's

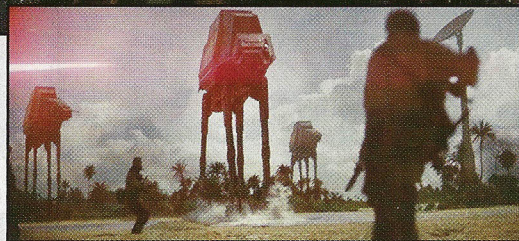


rebellious band comprised of rebel Saw Gerrera (Forest Whitaker), Captain Cassian Andor (Diego Luna in the Han Solo scoundrel role), blind warrior Chirrut Imwe (Donnie Yen), and Imperial defector Bodhi Rook (Riz Ahmed). And Jyn's father, Galen Erso (Mads Mikkelsen) is the scientist who may have designed the Death Star.

As far as the villains are concerned, this is the REAL Empire, not some First Order wannabes. The Stormtrooper uniforms are the original design as are the TIE fighters, AT-AT Walkers and Star Destroyers. Moreover, it will be great to see the "weapons test" that is the Death Star back in full destructive force. It's traditional touches like these that will stir the Midi-chlorians in any old school Star Wars fan's blood.

Then there are those black Death Troopers (based on an original Stormtrooper design concept by Ralph McQuarrie) – specialised Imperial soldiers under the command of Orson Krennic (Ben Mendelsohn), the director of Death Star security. Any new addition to the Imperial forces is worth looking forward to.

• *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* is in cinemas on Dec 14



*Rogue One*'s return to the era prior to the events of *A New Hope* – and its incorporation of the classic designs of the period – technically makes it a more legitimate prequel to Episode IV than the Lucas trilogy, which is perhaps the most exciting thing of all.

But if you need a further reason to get excited, check out what director Gareth Edwards did with *Godzilla* in his 2014 reimagining. Hot off his low budget debut *Monsters*, the British filmmaker took an iconic piece of cinema history and delivered a dark and visually inventive reimagining that was radically different to what everyone expected, while at the same time respecting the source material. If the trailers are any indication, he's brought the same level of creativity to *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*. **S**